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RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE
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SUBJECT: MINEMBWE UPDATE: FLARE-UP ON FEB 2; MONUC/FARDC
JOINT MISSION TO REGION

REF: KINSHASA 126

¶1. (U) Fighting briefly flared up on February 2 in the remote Haut Plateau region of South Kivu province between Banyamulenge troops under General Patrick Masunzu and dissident Banyamulenge fighters of the Moramvia Group and Group of 47. The dissident troops attempted unsuccessfully to take the village of Kamombo, approximately 50 km north-east of Minembwe. MONUC reported that two soldiers of the FARDC 112th Brigade and four renegade fighters were killed in the action.

¶2. (SBU) A joint UN-Congolese mission arrived in Minembwe February 3 in three MONUC helicopters to assess the military and humanitarian situations. The military delegation included FARDC land forces commander General Gabriel Amisi, 10th Military Region commander General Sylvain Tshikwej and the commander of MONUC's South Kivu Brigade. MONUC internal reporting indicates they met in Minembwe with General Patrick Masunzu, commander of the 112th Brigade, and planned to travel to Kamombo February 5 and 6 to attempt to hold further talks to resolve the crisis.

¶3. (U) An estimated 4000 people have fled their homes in the wake of the fighting. The delegation found Minembwe to be calm, and visited RCD president Azarias Ruberwa's home village seven km away, meeting with his mother and uncle. FARDC is reporting a death toll for the week's fighting of nine, three from Masunzu's 112th Brigade and six renegade fighters. MONUC also reported 17 government troops of the 112th wounded and four missing. The fighting began January 25 when the Moramvia Group under Major Michel Rukunda and the Group of 47 under Colonel Venant Bisogo clashed with elements of the 112th near the High Plateau village of Bijombo (reftel).

MEECE